Let the Great World Spin[1]: mobility, immobility and stillness in the age of transnational migration
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ABSTRACT
Movement and migration are by no means new phenomena. Humans are mobile creatures, and individuals, families and entire populations have moved around the globe throughout history, sometimes by choice, sometimes forced away. Since the late 20th century, however, what has been different about migration is the scale and speed of communications, of travel and transport between previously distinct and distant spaces. In this talk I consider ways in which movement and stillness, mobility and immobility, are continuing, or emerging, at a time in which globalization is increasingly associated with rupture, unsettled lives and homes, and general unease. I argue that we have moved from an idea of 'home' as a fixed place where most people spend most of their lives, to a more elastic notion of movement and of lives lived in motion, between dispersed spaces and places. Although the world appears to have opened, following the fall of the "Iron Curtain" and the softening of borders which accompanied the rearrangement of the map of Europe, there has simultaneously been an increase in state control and levels of surveillance, at both national and international levels. Drawing on my own research in Poland, and other ethnographies from the region, I consider how very different regimes of movement and what might be considered either stillness or immobility emerge in different cultural and politico-economic contexts, sometimes creating increased agency and opportunity, other times resulting both from and in growing inequalities.

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"The world spins. We stumble on. It is enough."
Colum McCann *Let the Great World Spin* 2009

I want to start by thanking the conference organisers, and particularly Vintila Mihalescu and Bogdan Iancu, for inviting me to speak here today. It is an honour and a privilege; thank you for having me.
The title of this paper is stolen/borrowed from a novel by Colum McCann. The first time I met Vintila Mihalescu, it was at a conference. We were on a panel together and I was talking about migration. He sat in the front of the audience, very still, looking very intent, and I was rather intimidated – I thought, oh dear, he hates what I am saying. The next day when we met again he said he had dreamed all night about Górale, the Polish highlanders I was talking about, flying though space, flying around the world. I realized he hadn't hated what I was saying, he had just been concentrating. This was reassuring. That image of Górale flying though around the world has stayed with me over the years, and when I encountered McCann's book, that was what the title evoked for me.

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[1] With thanks and apologies to Colum McCann

Movement and mobility

I was recently re-reading Walter Benjamin's wonderful essay on The Storyteller, and a particular paragraph struck me in relation to the questions raised by this conference's theme:

> With the first world war a process began to become apparent which has not halted since then. Was it not noticeable at the end of the war that men returned from the battlefield grown silent – not richer, but poorer in communicable experience? What ten years later was poured out in the flood of war books was anything but experience that goes from mouth to mouth. And there was nothing remarkable about that. For never has experience been contradicted more thoroughly than strategic experience by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power. A generation that had gone to school on a horse-drawn streetcar now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds, and beneath these clouds, in a field of force of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny, fragile, human body.
> Walter Benjamin (1968:84)

It is this relation, between fields of force of destructive torrents and explosions, and the tiny, fragile, human body, which lies at the centre of this talk.

I address the main theme of this conference – mobility and immobility – by focusing on both **movement** – between regions, between countryside and city, among different states - and on movement's opposite, **stillness** - the lack of movement and mobility which is often embedded in concepts of home, identity and belonging, and place. I begin by considering discourses and practices which seem to me to be dominant now, in this current time which Castles and Miller (2009) have named "the age of migration". I look particularly at the hardening of borders and the regimes of regulation which have accompanied the rapid increase in global movement since the 1990s, and the anti-migrant public discourse which is increasingly evident in many countries of the north and the west. In the second part of the talk, I shift to a different scale, and consider ethnographies of migration and movement, and what they show us about both mobility and stillness, as well as about risk and creativity.

Movement and mobility are themes with particular salience for anthropologists, both because they raise and confront the critical questions at the core of our discipline – the relation between structure and agency, the individual narrative and the grand history, the problem of identity and belonging in a world constantly in transition, the messiness of social life and the tidiness of social models - and because they encapsulate one of the most pressing political issues, if not *the* most pressing political issue, of our time – the division of humanity into the entitled and the excluded, into those who command their own subjectivities and those who are silenced, coerced, and molded into the social and cultural templates of others.

Such dialectical relations are not new. Hannah Arendt (1943) recognized them as early as the 1940s, in her article on refugees and rights: in recent years, they have been articulated most powerfully, in theoretical terms, by Agamben (1998), De Genova (2013) and others working on bare existence, border regimes and exclusion, and the limitation, or elimination, by states, of the personhood, voice and subjectivity of particular categories of people – those in limbo, in transition, expelled or fleeing from one nation state without any right to enter legally into another. The scenes depicted by those engaged in theorizing the current structures and regimes of exclusion are, as they should be, bleak and critically pessimistic. They present one side of a complex process of institutionally enforced exclusion. However, we need the ethnographer's account as well, to remind us that people's lives, even in the most bleak of setting and contexts, involve hope as well as despair, agency and choice as well as coercion. Michael Jackson, in his book *The Wherewithall of Life* (2012), goes further than most contemporary anthropologists in confronting the messiness of real lives behind the austerity of theory. Centring the book around very long and detailed transcripts of interviews and conversations with three specific migrants to Europe and the US, he juxtaposes what he sees as the theoretical issues at stake in an existential anthropology of mobility and movement with the small details and what he calls the everyday ethics (as opposed to generalizing moralities) of ordinary lives.

Challenges of/for ethnography/anthropology

Movement, we know, can be creative; the creativity required first to imagine a new life trajectory, moving across space and time, and then to take the risk of following the imaginary through, is enormous. It can also have terrible consequences- the recent sinking of the East African migrants' boat in the Mediterranean, resulting in hundreds of deaths, is a horrendous reminder of the dangers of movement. One of the things that struck me most listening to accounts of that disaster was the way it reflected how massive the gap can be between local and global knowledge. Survivors who were interviewed had had no previous knowledge of how big the Mediterranean Sea is, or how deep. One survivor interviewed, a man from east Africa, believed it to be about up to his shoulders. Nor did some know how long the trip would take – another survivor interviewed said he had expected to arrive in Trafalgar Square by the following day. Time and again, ethnographic reports and migrants' narratives show that, very often, little is known about the geographies of either the journey or the destination. In such contexts, migration is an undertaking of huge risk, with no way of estimating the degree of danger; but it is also an enactment of huge hope, of an optimisism that the destination holds a better future, making it worth taking the risk.

Movement is of course often *not* the result of creative imaginings of other futures, but rather is forced, imposed, necessitated by economic or political circumstance or events like war, famine, drought or other trauma. *Immobility*, reflected in what I have elsewhere (Pine 2008) called the stillness of place, in the sense of groundedness, home and belonging, might seem like a more benign state of being than forced movement. It may reflect a security of emplacement, a solidity of roots, connections, ties, emotions, belonging. Stillness, however, like movement, may have other, less benign connotations. Immobility can imply the lack of *freedom* to move, and may also be imposed rather than chosen. An obvious example of this would be the constraints on both internal movement, and movement across borders, experienced by citizens of the socialist countries during the Cold War. Or, lack of movement may result from a lethargic

conservatism, or an inability to imagine alternative places and ways of being, or take risks. These are complicated areas to untangle, and together cover a range of rather murky grey areas.

There are also various oppositions or binaries attached to these concepts of movement and stillness in the context of migration. I would suggest that these arise partly from our own culturally rooted ambivalence about the concept of migration, and partly from our often un-examined but nevertheless very powerful cultural beliefs about the nature of the nation state, its boundaries and boundedness, and what it means to belong. So, for instance, a basic tenet of neo-liberalism and of the flexible economy which marks what David Harvey (1992) refers to as the condition of post-modernity is that movement is on the whole productive, liberating, creates and generates growth, etc. On the other hand, many of the conservative attitudes linked to neo-liberalism emphasise the importance of the stability of home, the potential dangers to that home emanating from movement *from outside*, particularly migration, and the equally strong if not stronger fears of pollution and danger invited by movement *to*. Let me give an example of this. In Poland in the 1990s, as borders opened, there were many articles in the popular press and discussions, both public and private, of danger coming in from the east. Ukrainian and Russian men were represented as violent, heavy drinking mafiosi, who would fight, dishonourably, with local men and who posed a threat to the honour and indeed bodies of local women. Ukkrainian and Russian women were portrayed as sex workers who would seduce and possibly infect local men, and as traders who would undersell local market women and who would offer shoddy and inferior goods. The open western borders were equally threatening. Polish women were seen as being in enormous danger of seduction, abduction and ruin at the hands of western men who would tempt them away from home. Images of danger, pollution, and economic and emotional loss dominated both the depictions of strangers and others coming in from the east, and of Poles, particularly women, leaving for the west. In other words, the stillness or immobility of home, or of the family, group, nation, was associated with well secured

boundaries: movement and migration are restless processes, which transgress boundaries, potentially letting the good slip out, and the bad seep in.

Migration as Discourse and Practice

Ironically, these discourses also travel across borders. Eastern Europeans who ended up in the UK from the 1990s until the present were and are represented in much the same language and imagery that was rife in Poland when the borders opened. At the height of the boom of Poles migrating to the UK, in the first few years of this century, Romanians, Bulgarians and Ukrainians moved west *into* Poland, where they encountered the same violence, exclusionary practices and prejudice that the Poles were facing in the UK. After 2008, when Poles began returning home, the returnees turned on the migrants, who were seen as taking their jobs, mobilizing trades unions against them, trying to force them 'home'. In each of these three contexts, ironically, the language of exclusion, of the vilification of outsiders and of the sanctity and entitlements of *home*, is identical.

Migration may be chosen, or forced. If it is chosen rather than forced, and IF those choosing to move are those at the top of the pile, ie professionals, celebrities, etc, it is usually seen as a GOOD thing, although it may have unfortunate connotations of talent or brain drain for the place of origin. If it is chosen by those at the bottom, those who flock in to more traditionally affluent countries to earn a living as the agricultural workers, builders, carers, it is often seen as a very damaging process for the countries of origin, and a very dangerous one for the destination countries. From these contradictory ideas of chosen movement and forced migrations comes the corollary, a kind of bio-politics in which the forced migrant is a victim, while those who chose mobility are manifestations of creative, positive agents.

There is, I would argue, a particular category of people who can move between countries, perhaps maintaining residences in several, and never be seen or classified as migrants. These are affluent, connected, educated, global citizens, cosmopolitans who

are entitled to move freely and securely through the world. Migrants are another category altogether, edged with both vulnerability and need, and carrying possibilities of encroachment and pollution.

A similar set of oppositions links migration and mobility, both discursively and practically, to the nation state and new national and global economic regimes which encompass control of movement, borders, and individual rights and entitlements. We are told that borders have been softening, opening, and allowing more freedom of movement since the demise of the Soviet empire and the expansion of the European Union. At the same time however we are receiving compelling accounts of the hardening of borders – detention camps in France and the UK, a highly militarized border between Ukraine and Poland, a growing industry in people-smuggling from the peripheries to the centre of the EU reminiscent of the brutal no man's land of the American-Mexican border zone which Europeans purport to deplore. What is being protected here, in both western Europe and North America, is the sanctity of (western/northern) affluence, health etc, from (eastern/southern) outsiders' claims of entitlement; what is being controlled is the movement of people and commodities across political borders which increasingly signify the strengthening of structures serving to reproduce exclusion and inequalities and, in fact, also generate them.

Eminent historians and philosophers such as Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm saw the nation state and its linked nationalist ideologies as phenomena rooted in the empire building of the 19th century, which they predicted would have declined or disappeared by the end of the 20th century. These predictions were not fulfilled; rather, the Soviet Empire collapsed, and in the wake of this demise, new discourses of blood and nation, linked to the drawing of lines between those who were included and those who were to be excluded, proliferated. The 1990s witnessed the rise of right wing nationalist movements across Europe, which the expansion of the EU in the early 21st century did little to abate. The nation state was not withering away, as a result either of the

satisfactory resolution of the class struggle, or the growing internationalism of global capitalism, although its economic mandate might be being *eroded* by the sheer force of global capitalism and culture, transnational corporations and increasingly flexible forms of citizenship. Further, the nation state is worldwide seen by many of those currently studying and writing about borders, migration and citizenship, as becoming more rather than less powerful, xenophobic and violent (see for example the works of anthropologists and geographers working on "fortress Europe" or more generally on mobility and possibilities, such as De Genova (2013), Bigo et al (2013), Follis 2012), Massey 2005). Migrants, in the narratives of the nation states, appear as matter out of place. Border regimes and immigration controls and regulations routinely deny their subjectivities, assigning them into a particular position half in and half outside the destination nation's economy, society and culture. The demand for regulation and surveillance increases. Borders are increasingly controlled and patrolled. Bodies representing the state and government, from border patrol agents to police to politicians, view migration in a negative or ambivalent light; at worst, a source of erosion of state finances through provision of housing, health care, education and attack on national culture (whatever that might be); at best a necessary evil, providing labour and services at a low cost but also threatening the national integrity. Many, if not most, social scientists working on these themes see the state and the border controls as oppressive, exclusive and outside the reach of international human rights. There appears to be little common ground between the positions. We have come full circle.

There are, of course, other narratives, of new and expanded subjectivities, of new notions of home, and of the meanings of and relations between generations, genders, age cohorts. And these in turn link to ideas about entitlement – entitlement to work, food, healthcare, housing, childcare. What is the basis of entitlement? Who is included and who excluded? And how, as anthropologists, are we to understand and document the courage and creativity, as well as the often desperate necessity, it takes to leave

behind what is safe, known, and holds the stillness of home, and go out into that unknown, and spinning very fast, great world?

The Ethnographic Imagination

"*New inventions or creations are not about replacing the old with the new, but adding to the old, producing new articulations***." (**Stengers 2003: 264)

It seems to me that if we are going to think ourselves out of these conundrums, we need a new or enhanced kind of imagination – a new ethnographic imagination (see Willis 2000). As anthropologists, we have I think learned consciously to avoid and disown the big dichotomies of the 1970s, but they creep back in, in disguise, in these kinds of contradictory and binary images – the good and the evil, the natural and the political, the public and the private – of migration, of the state, of the border. So my question is (and I want to make it clear immediately that I do not know the answer, and am NOT proposing one): How do we avoid this kind of reductionism, and how might we develop a new or at least enhanced and more innovative imagination? My own view is that answers lie in an acknowledgement of complexity, of the tangled up and complicated, messy, and often contradictory, worlds and lives which people (as individuals, members of families, citizens, outsiders) occupy simultaneously. In other words, perhaps the answer, at least in terms of dealing with ethnography, is to avoid trying to find a neat fit between data and theoretical model, but rather emphasise the messiness of social lives and lived worlds, particularly those which are mobile, moving and indeed often spinning through different sectors of the world.

Because I am more than anything an ethnographer – my answer to almost any question is "Look at the ethnography!" - and because I believe that ethnography is worthless without history, I have to take an historical perspective. So, what I want to do next is to look at various fragments of ethnography, historically situated, and see what they can tell us.

Politicizing migration

It is clear that new sets of questions are emerging as the formerly stable or affluent economies of the north and the west are themselves becoming precarious, as rates of unemployment, social and economic polarization and exclusion are rising, and as immigrants come to be perceived as both a necessity and a threat. Again, these are not new patterns, any more than mobility and migration are new. But they are intensifying and it is difficult to see how their course could be altered without a radical re-thinking, in both the richer and poorer countries, of not only concepts and practices of work and sources of value, but also ideologies concerning entitlement, and related regimes of care, and social security of all sorts. Above all, it would depend on a sense of social responsibility which is collective and transcends state borders. The main obstacles to such re-thinking appear to me to lie in the promotion of individualism and positive acceptance of self interest which form the corner stone of neo-liberalism, accompanied by deeply entrenched attitudes of racism and xenophobia which are easy to invoke in discourses and practices which vilify the 'other' and differentiate between full and part citizenship, rights, access to resources etc.

In the UK at the moment, it is again possible to imagine a politician giving a speech along the lines of Enoch Powell's infamous "Rivers of Blood speech of April 1968. Indeed, just a couple of months ago government sector vehicles, plastered with a poster depicting a blurred image of a scarved/hooded/turbaned? person (ie implicitly an immigrant and a criminal) and displaying the words "In the UK illegally? GO HOME or FACE ARREST" were touring the streets of various boroughs, such as Haringey, with apparently high numbers of illegal immigrants. This was a pilot study by the Home Office, aimed at encouraging illegal migrants, living underground and without papers, to give themselves up and allow the government to deport them. By sleight of hand, whiteness comes to represent the British and European citizen – while those who are visibly other – scarved women, men in turbans, people with browner skin, people speaking Slavonic languages – are labeled first as migrants, and from there then slide into a discursive position of possible illegals.

De Genova (2013), Baidotti (2010), Bigo (20008) and many others have discussed the way that illegal status is created legally, by the state's rule of law, and is made visible at the border, the point at which entrance is allowed or the applicant is sent home. Illegal migrants cross borders invisibly, hidden in cars or trucks, or making the crossing at unregulated points on the borderline. While the state has made these people illegal, however, the labour market has need of their services, and so once they have made the dangerous and hazardous crossing successfully, they can plunge into the vast area of the grey economy, working for lower than minimum wage, without benefits, in jobs that most local people would refuse. As carers for an aging population, for the ill and for the children of legally working parents, they are providing invaluable service; were they all to follow the government's suggestion (described above), and GO HOME, there would be a massive hole in the sector of domestic labour, care and agricultural labour, let alone driving and transport, building. And so, in a very peculiar way, the undocumented are simultaneously incorporated into and central to the host country's economy and social fabric, and excluded from it, kept quite outside it.

Visible and invisible migrant states

I spent some time in Arizona recently, and was struck by a paradox: people spoke to me about "illegals", sometimes with great sympathy for their plight, sometimes representing them as dangerous and polluting, but always as 'other', and as people who would have been better off staying home. Simultaneously, however, these same people employed Mexicans as cleaners, nannies, gardeners and other service providers; some came with, some without, papers. I realized that the concept of the illegal was associated directly to nearness to the border, and existence in the marginal liminal zone of the desert, which has to be crossed to reach the anonymous jungle streets of the city, or the freeways heading north. Once they had emerged from the liminal grey border zone, without dying of thirst or collapsing from heat fatigue or being arrested, those

who survived the crossing were able to enter the vast grey economy which props up white America, and to moved
 from being a dangerous alien to a valued, if very poorly paid, provider of services.

I want to turn now to ethnographic research on movement and mobility, and on both the stillness of home and problems with the act of going home, or maintaining home, faced by the mobile. I want first to consider the category of 'migrant' or 'immigrant' itself, and reflect on why it is such a problematic concept to use. Then I want to look at different ways that home and movement might be both juxtaposed and intertwined. Finally, with these discussions in mind, I shall turn to my own ethnographic material, as well as material drawn from the research of others.

In terms of this discussion, we could argue there are three categories of people: those from 'here', natural real citizens; those from 'elsewhere' with papers, and those others from 'elsewhere, the undocumented, represented so vividly by John Berger's Seventh Man (Berger and Mohr 1975). There are illegal and legal migrants. Both are not from 'here'. One is allowed to be visible, one not.

Actually, there are very few people who are not migrants, if we look back a few generations, especially in Europe and North America. If not migrants from another country, then they are migrant from North or South, from countryside to city. And what about less spatial concepts of migration? Upwardly mobile class movements for instance? Even the very dubious argument that everyone is now middle class implies a move away, or migration, from a hierarchical or stratified system.

But the way the term migrant is used holds particular and peculiar implications. A migrant (or immigrant) is rarely a successful professional – that person is more likely to be considered a cosmopolitan, or a naturalized citizen, depending on context. Much as the way 'youth' and 'single mother' in the UK are load bearing terms (for youth, read black, troubled, causing trouble, dangerous; for single mother, read teenaged, working

class, probably black, troubled and causing trouble, welfare dependent), migrant or immigrant evokes images of poverty, backwardness, otherness, often illegality and a generally precarious existence. Looked at in this way, the idea that we are all migrants in one way or another loses credibility. In many of the politicalized discussions and discourses of the late 20th/early 21st centuries, migrant becomes a highly pejorative term.

So how do people living and working in other countries, often informally or illegally, deal with the practices of exclusion which the regulations and laws of the state surround them, and how are they able to make a sense of home or belonging, or to maintain a connection and inclusive practices with the home they have left?

One of the fascinating aspects of looking at the differences between theoretical and ethnographic accounts of movement, mobility and migration is that while much of the recent work in the former category addresses exclusion, exploitation, misrecognition and misrepresentation of value and labour, denial of some subjectivities and imposition of others, the ethnographic work tends to reflect both exclusion and inequality, and agency and creative social practice. Structurally, migrants may occupy an excluded and denigrated space; in their own lives, they may be active agents, working strategically with whatever resources might be available to them.

Ethnographies of east-west migration

For many citizens of the states of eastern, central and southeastern Europe, both during and particularly after socialism, going abroad and working appeared to be the best strategy for earning money and accumulating goods in ways that could substantially change the way and quality of life of the entire household back home. So migration was often developed as a household strategy, sending some household members away in hope of ensuring the future of others. And this in turn often meant, for the migrants, working in conditions and socio-economic contexts which were not only not highly

valued, but in fact were rather under-valued, both in the host country and at home. In a sense migration takes the moral or social value out of work; labour becomes rather something to be endured for a greater good in the future.

I want now to turn to some ethnographic contexts, and to consider the points I have raised above in more detail in relation to these. I will look first at some of my own research in Poland, which spans the period from the Gierek years in the 1970s to the post-accession period at the beginning of this (21st) century. Following on from this, I want to turn to some research by a recent and a current PhD student, the former working on female Ukranian care workers in Italy, the latter on Chechen male asylum seekers in Poland. In referring to all of these cases, I want to explore migration as a process which is both future orientated and (nearly always) backward looking.

In the three regions of Poland I am considering here, one – the Podhale- has been marked by movement and migration on quite a large scale since at least the 17th century. A mountainous region spatially and culturally quite removed from the centre, it is an area which has also been politically and economically marginal and excluded for much of that time. In both its marginality and the long established mobility of its population, it is very different historically from the second region I discuss, Łódź and its surrounds.

The city of Łódź was the site of early industrialization in the 19th century, which made it more a destination of local (rural-urban) migration than a source of extensive out-migration, and secured its central and incorporated position in the national political economy. Known as 'the city of working women' (*miasto kobiet pracowniczych*) because of the centrality of the textile trade in the local economy, it had a female working population fiercely committed to socialism, but also fully capable of chastising the socialist state when it failed to uphold its part of the moral contract between worker and manager. The textile workers of Łódź comprised a highly politicised, at times militant, work force, and were active players in all of the different periods of industrial unrest and social protest which took place between the 1950s and 1981.

My third research site, the city of Lublin and its surrounding areas, situated on the edge of the *kresy*, the borderlands between Poland and Ukraine, was an early political and religious centre, the site of the capital of the short-lived Polish Lithuanian Union in the mid- 17th century, of the famous Catholic University (the only non secular (Catholic) university to remain open throughout socialism) and of major automobile and helicopter factories as well as extensive lighter industry. Although Solidarity had a strong presence in the area, and in fact in 1980 the strikes in the Swidnik auto factory preceded those in the Lenin Shipyards by a few days, Lublin is better known as a conservative, strongly Catholic region, with a long history of ethnic tensions and violence across borders as well as internally[2]. These three regions have different social, economic and political histories, and quite varied histories of migration.

In the late 1970s, when I began my first fieldwork in Poland, there was almost no house among the 250 or so in the Podhale village I lived in which did not have a member working in Chicago. This pattern of migration to Chicago was not new. It far pre-dated the socialist period, beginning in the last quarter of the 19th century, when famine, plague and land fragmentation sent Górale abroad "for bread", to other parts of eastern and southern Europe, to western Europe and most lucratively to North America. It still continues today, although there is now an increase in shorter migrations, to destinations such as Italy and Greece, and an opening of new migratory paths, for instance to the UK and Ireland. Chicago is still an important destination, but now tends to be a permanent rather than temporary one, or at least until the age of pension (a pension goes a lot further in rural Poland than in Chicago).

The Podhale case is an interesting one because movement and migration characterise economic organisation from the 17th century, when Górale shepherds migrated from Wlachian regions of what is now Romania west along the Carpathians with their herds, until today. So, unlike the other cases I am going to consider here, migration from the Podhale is not necessarily a strategy emerging from the collapse of the socialist economy or the opening up of new economic markets in Europe. Rather it is one of a

bundle of strategies historically elaborated by households and kin groups, outside the context of or beyond the reach of the state. As I have discussed elsewhere (eg Pine 2008), villagers derive their senses of identity and belonging, and of personal value, from their land and house, and their farming and craft labour. Waged labour is consistently undervalued, although since the early socialist period nearly all villagers have been involved in it for at least part of their working lives, and it is actually the main source of income for most houses. Migrant labour, however, is much more complex than local aged labour. The successful migrant brings home earnings far far greater than any local income and in that sense it is considered to be completely different from local waged labour, even if it involves exactly the same work. Because of its potential for generating (relatively) enormous income it is highly desired, sought after and valued. It however also exacts a high price, both from the migrant him or herself and from their kindred. Often the work the migrant does abroad is hard, and lacking in prestige. Often the living conditions are bleak and difficult, and often employers are harsh or dishonest. Young female migrants tend to work as au pairs or housekeepers, and when they talk to their families by phone or return to visit, they complain about being lonely and homesick. Looking after other people's children, they miss months and sometimes years of their own children's lives. Similarly, caring for the elderly abroad often means that they miss the last years of their own elderly kin in the village. All of these factors generate real pain and emotional hardship for both the migrants and their families. However, migration continues to be central to the village way of life, and to a very large extent, kinship obligations and household economies revolve around it. It is negotiated within the immediate and extended family who will go abroad and who will stay behind, who will look after the children or the elderly parents, and what the remittances will be spent on. In this sense it is a project of hope and is geared towards the future, towards building a new house, investing in more land or other property, providing dowries for daughters, and generally building the prestige, and the future of the house. It is always a risk, of course. Some people are unsuccessful and return empty handed. Occasionally, although very rarely, a migrant breaks contact with house and family, and makes a new

life abroad. Sometimes children whose parents are working abroad run wild, get into trouble, or are uncared for by their kin, or elderly parents become ill, isolated and neglected. But despite these risks, wage migration remains the most valued strategy in nearly all village houses.

One of the most interesting aspects of economic migration is that it involves people in very different sets of temporalities and regimes of value simultaneously.

As with transnational citizenship more generally, migrants exist in, or sometimes between, two worlds. They work, in the present, in the host economy. There their work is undervalued and underpaid, and they are often the most exploited of workers, at the bottom of all social and economic piles (see Kaneff and Pine 2011). This bleak existence, however, is hidden from the present in the village. As family and village continue in their absence, the migrant occupies a kind of future position or vague point in the future – the point of their return, the point of receipt of remittances, the point of future investments and reunification of families. In this future position, the poorly paid earnings are transformed into immense social and monetary value in the village economy. In the migrants present, he or she often lives in terrible housing, eats badly, buying only the cheapest food, and works perhaps at two or more jobs, with little or no social life. But in the future they are imagining, they have created from this suffering a new affluence for themselves and their dependents.

I would argue that this kind of endemic migration – migration as a way of life, as a major strand in house and kin strategies- which has deep historical roots, is different from what we might think of crisis migration – migration which takes place as a response to war, economic collapse or other hardship or trauma. In Łódź and its surrounding areas, where I worked on the effects of the collapse of the textile trade on women and domestic economies, immediately after the fall of the socialist government, it was striking that migration was seen as an act of hopelessness, and of abandoning the future (Pine 1998, 2002. Textile workers were firmly and fiercely identified with their work and, as I have argued elsewhere, it was a major source of identity and value for them. In the early 1990s, in the middle of the most brutal period of economic restructuring, I talked

to women about the possibility of moving elsewhere, either within Poland or abroad, to find work when the factories closed down in Łódź. Their reaction was uniformly one of horror. Their imagined future was not in new worlds or new kinds of opportunity, but in a restitution of the lost order. They wanted their own work back, they wanted socialism back, and they wanted to be valued for what they did. They could not imagine leaving their tight networks of kin and friends. By the mid to late 90s, however, some of the women were considering moving within Poland, although no one I spoke to contemplated going abroad. But on the whole, the focus of their imagined futures and of their hope was the next generation, their children. As one woman phrased it, at the end of a long, very tearful interview, "Of course I still have dreams. We have to have dreams, don't we Or we have nothing. But our dreams are for the children now. We have to keep going (living) for the children" (See also Pine 1998, Pilkington 1997).

In this region, it is the next generation, the children of whom this woman was speaking, who became the migrants. An ethnographic documentary *Nasza Ulica* (Our Street), shown a few years ago at the Astra Festival here in Sibiu, followed the lives of one family living near one of the biggest 19th century textile factories in Łódź. It was one of the factories which had employed many of the women I interviewed, and it had first made draconian redundancies in the early 90s, then been sold into German ownership, and finally closed down completely. A decade later, when the film was being made, it was in the process of being turned into an enormous shopping mall complex, called, without I suspect irony, Manufaktura. The film follows the different members of this particular family for 3 years, while the arcade project is being developed. The flat where they live is down the street from the factory/shopping mall. Living in the flat at the beginning of the film are a widowed grandmother, who had been a textile worker in the factory, her middle-aged son, who had also worked there, his daughter, who was unemployed and pregnant, and her daughter's boyfriend. Over the next 3 years, the old woman is the main support, emotionally and financially, of the whole family. She works as a cleaner. Her son drinks a great deal, and from time to time goes to the old factory to try to get work as a guard or in construction on the developing shopping mall site. He is never

successful. The daughter has her baby, and her boyfriend becomes involved n petty crime and goes to prison. At the end of the film, the (great)grandmother is raising the baby, the men are unemployed, the younger still in prison, and the granddaughter has migrated to Germany. My impression is that this is a story typical of former textile families. The older woman, like so many of her generation whom I spoke to 20 years ago, never worked in her own field again, and felt that she had lost her place and her value. She also felt she had to remain where she was, to hold the family together, which she did. It was the young woman who was able to imagine new beginnings, and to make plans for a future which could provide a way out of poverty, unemployment and petty crime. However, it also seemed to involve breaking everyday ties with her family, including her child.

Unlike Górale migration, this example from Łódź seemed to be less of an investment by several generations into the growth of the family/house, than a bid for personal, individual freedom on the part of the younger woman, probably at the cost of leaving her child. The grandmother, of the generation whose members felt they had been thrown away and had no value any more and no future except through the children, continued to hold the present together, but with apparently little prospect of improvement in her own future.

After EU accession, the situation regarding economic migration changed considerably for Poland and the other new member states. Although only the UK, Sweden and Ireland granted the countries from the first expansion (2004) full rights to work and residence, all citizens of these accession states had more limited rights throughout the entire Union. Interestingly, not all migrants welcomed this new legal status. Górale villagers I spoke to about that time who were working in Italy, for instance, had no intention of becoming "legal" or getting proper papers, as they felt it would allow the state to gain to much information about them, and of course would subject them to income loss through taxes. Again, I think this reflects these migrants' simultaneous occupation of

two, or even three, different regimes of value – their local one, where they expect to be visible, known and recognised and to carry out their financial obligations to kin and community; that of the Polish state, where they have to be visible as citizens in some contexts, such as education or taxation but may try to limit the financial implications of this involvement , and want to be visible and financially *supported* in others, such as health care; and that of the site of migration, where they exchange their undervalued labour for economic value in the future, and try very hard to stay invisible in the present.

For other categories of Poles, who have perhaps less complicated relations with the state, however, the laws of EU expansion provided a new vision of hope and a new possibilities in imaginings of the future. In the period leading up to and following accession I was involved in research in Lublin and the eastern border lands with Ukraine, observing the consequences of EU membership as they were manifested in new patterns of exclusion. In research sites ranging from NGOs aimed at facilitating participation in EU projects and funding for agriculture and small business, to unemployment offices and claimant groups, to charities for the homeless, we looked at the strategies that people were developing and pursuing in response to the changing political economy. It was clear from interview and life story material that in this region, after a history of different waves of migration and displacement, often forced and usually political rather than economic, over centuries, the socialist period had on the whole been a time of little movement. Most people we spoke to who were old enough to have been in the war had kin in other parts of Poland, or Europe, but on the whole these moves had been made prior to or during the war years. However, among the age set from late teens to late twenties, nearly everyone we spoke to, male and female, employed and unemployed, rural and urban, had close friends or relatives working abroad, mostly in the UK or Germany, and intended to go abroad themselves. Again, for nearly all of them, migration represented a temporary interruption in their lives in Lublin, and also a tool to enable them to make better lives for themselves and their

families. Some planned to earn as much money as possible, as quickly as possible, and return to Lublin to set up a small business. Some concentrated more on training, hoping to study at university, to learn computer skills, to improve their languages. Most of them arranged their migration through networks of friends, not through kin (which, for instance, is the normal form that migration nets among Górale take). Several young people we interviewed had already been abroad, had made connections to temporary jobs – waitressing, working as nannies, working in construction, agriculture, factories and meat packing plants, among other things- to which they could return. Of these some had already made several short trips, while others intended to return again at intervals.

Depending on the kind of work they were doing some of these migrants felt visible and valued, and not much worse paid than local workers, while others, particularly those working in agriculture, felt vulnerable, exploited and underpaid. The ones who felt they had been and were successful migrants clearly saw themselves as participating equally in two different labour markets, for very different reasons. At the time, this region of Poland was officially the poorest and most economically "backward' area in the entire EU, and unemployment, in both formal and informal terms, was very high. So here again, migration became an act of faith and hope in the future, a belief that by going away, and participating in a different economy, the present difficulties of home could be put on hold and, ideally, overcome on return.

Where this migration is different from the Górale patterns is in relation to kinship obligations and exchanges. It is very common in this area for parents of grandparents to pay for the travel, or to pay for English lessons or IT training. I was told very specifically by several grandparents that in the past they would have helped to pay for a flat or for house materials, or a wedding, and they saw this as the contemporary equivalent. But the young people were not expected to send back remittances to the senior generations, and nor were the senior generations expected to look after small children in the

parents' absence, at least in the city. This is rather a very modern kind of migration, often repeated, by young people who are attempting to build new and very different lives from those of their parents and grandparents. While they may well bring back presents, they only in rare circumstances hand over their earnings either as regular remittances or when returning. Rather, the elder generations are consciously helping them to build these new and different, and often far more individualistic, futures. There may well be an expectation of care in old age of course, but in the present what is emphasis is the hope that the children will be able to build something new. And what is seen as new, and valued, is not the manual labour in industry and agriculture from which many of the senior generation drew their value and sense of identity, but non-material labour, in IT, using languages and other non-manual skills.

These three periods I have been discussing were all times of marked economic and social uncertainty in Poland generally, and in each region particularly; each generated adaptive strategies to some extent at least peculiar to the specific time and region. However, an overall pattern emerges in which the work done by the migrant abroad involves being temporarily part of a quite different value regime from the one at home, but is undertaken in order to maintain the one at home, or to improve or change it. So, for instance, young people from the Lubelskie countryside may go and do agricultural labour in the UK, meeting a market created by refusal of young British workers to perform agricultural labour or to work for low wages, in order to be able fund *leaving* agriculture and setting up in a quite different kind of work when they get home. In all of these cases, present hardship is countered by future hopes, and strategies are developed which play on, and take advantage of, the distances and differences between the home and destination political economies and markets.

Górale, who operated both with the state as wage labourers and outside it as illegal migrants, informal entrepreneurs and the like, saw little difference in their value regimes with the fall of socialism. In the other areas I discussed, we saw generations thrown away, and new attempts being made to change the future, and the kinds of

value it creates, by entering temporarily into other economies. I want to look very briefly now at two final examples, one about Chechens in Lublin (based on research by Michal Sipos, currently being written up as a Goldsmiths PhD) and the other about Ukrainians in Italy (from the CEU PhD thesis of Olena Fedyuk). Both of these examples seem to me to show even more clearly than my own material the tension between hope and despair that migration so often involves, and the way that migration projects so often are undertaken 'for the sake of the children".

The Chechens Sipos worked with had all entered Poland as the first port of entry to the EU, and were seeking the right to remain as asylum seekers fleeing the violence at home. Sipos' work shows that it was often men and their sons who travelled to Poland, sometimes followed by wives and daughters, sometimes not. The asylum seekers experienced extreme forms of racism from some Poles; they lived in temporary housing which was in the worst, most violent part of the city and which was very very bare; the food they received they considered inedible; they were unable to work until they had residence status, and many did not want to get residence status because they hoped to disappear underground and make their way west, to Paris or London. In other words, what they had lost was enormous, and the new world in which they found themselves on the whole excluded them from all forms of citizenship and most forms of civic participation. Sipos tells the story of a father and his two young sons. The father, like most if not all of the senior men in the asylum centre, has left home and migrated because of his fears for his sons. He is convinced that they would have got caught in the violence of war torn Chechnya had they remained, and the only way he could see to save them from the violence was to leave. His plan for them was to have them trained in boxing, so that they could become champions, and make a new life. And so all of his energy and resources were channeled into securing and paying for training for the boys in the local boxing club. In other words, he leaves home to protect his children's future, but he plans to build this new future by drawing on aspects of past connected to making identity and belonging not through productive labour, in this case, but through

constructs of masculinity literally crafted through the male body and labours of controlled violence.

Olena Fedyuk (CEU 2011) in her study of female Ukranian care givers in Italy, also shows much migration is a future orientated process, which takes place at enormous present personal cost – ie leaving one's own old and frail parents in order to look after someone else's, leaving one's children and grandchildren in order to care for those of others – which can only be vindicated if it generates profit and reward and growth – in other words, if it provides for a better future. And so, in this discourse the Ukranian migrant woman is making the sacrifice for the greater good.

In the life stories she presents, Fedyuk shows that is frequently the middle aged women, often professional by training but unemployed in Ukraine's frail economy, who chose to go abroad to find work so that their adult daughters can stay at home and look after their children. The mothers send remittances home, which enable the daughters not to work. However, these same mothers often take their young adult or adolescent sons with them, because they believe (like the Chechen fathers) that if they were to stay at home they would be in danger – in this case from both violence and alcohol, framed by a climate of endemic unemployment.

So, in a sense, it could be argued that through the work of their bodies – and care work must be one of the most intimate and most embodied forms of paid labour that there is- and through the fact of migration, these women are attempting to create something that looks very like Harvey's (2000) call for new spaces of hope, through new transnational bodies, for the next generation. And some doubtlessly succeed. But it is always a risky venture attempting to buy a new or different future, and the tragedies of loss here revolve around the women's realization that they can never really go home, that the future they have invested in no longer has a place for them, and worst of all, that in some cases they must face illness or death in Italy, either the illness and death of

their parents back in Ukraine, or their own while still abroad and away from family. Illness and death however have no place in the migrant's story, which she is building around a trope of long affluent futures for herself, her parents or elderly kin, and her children and grandchildren. The world of 'home, the spaces of migrant life, and the narratives of imagined futures do not sit comfortably together; they rarely join up. But out of their uneasy fit people manage to fashion workable lives. In Willis' words:

> The old, 'off the shelf' cultural worlds no longer supply believable practices and materials. Class traditions, work, trade unions, organized religion, the family, parental role models, liberal humanist education – these things no longer believably place and fill identity in connected and homogeneous ways. No one knows that social maps are any more, there are no automatic belongings, so, more than ever, you have to work for, and make, your own cultural significance. (Willis 2000:xv)

Zournazi suggests that we need to articulate "a hope that does not narrow our visions of the world but instead allows different histories, memories and experiences to enter into present conversations on revolution, freedom and our cultural senses of belonging" (2002: 18). What I have tried to show in this paper is the way the problems of capitalism or neo-liberalism, combined with the failure of state socialism, create conditions of precariousness which people must then try to navigate their way through. I have suggested that ideas about hope and the future are not absent from most lives, even those which are highly disrupted, but rather can be seen to be deeply rooted in household, kin and individual strategies such as those which develop around migration, which allow people to move between different economic regimes and registers, and different temporalities. This mobility, so characteristic of the late 20th and early 21s centuries, is perhaps both a curse and a blessing. The challenge for the ethnographer is I think to imagine how these increasingly complex lives are actually lived, in all of their messiness, and what changes in the way we conceive of personhood, subjectivities and entitlements might be possible if we pay attention to the conditions of these real lived lives. While I would argue absolutely that politically informed theory and critique is a crucial part of anthropological analysis, in the end it is the ethnographic record which provides the material for forming such analysis. And it is though exercising ethnographic

imagination, recognizing the types of social and cultural creativity that individuals bring to even the most apparently bleak lives, that we can best produce accounts which reveal what Willis (2000) refers to as 'life as art'.

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